

A Holiday Story:  
The Last Christmas Tree  
See Pages 16-17



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## You Just Can't Compare Apples With Oranges

Comparing your electric bill with that of your neighbor is a lot like comparing selections from various bins in the produce department of our favorite supermarket.

Even if you and the neighbor are served by the same power supplier, his bill might resemble a red delicious apple while your bill has the characteristics of a tart MacIntosh.

See related story, page 10

The two bills may have ripened on the same farm, but each family had its own approach to cultivating, pruning and otherwise caring for their patches of this mythical orchard.

Your family's patterns of power use and your home's energy requirements aren't likely to match those of your neighbor's family and home. For example, you may use far less hot water than your neighbor, who has a teen-age daughter with a fondness for five-minute showers. But your neighbor may have equipped his house with extra insulation, which your house lacks.

Should the two families have identical kwh totals for a given month, they could still find different price tags on their "apples" depending on the rate schedules they're under. Some power suppliers offer special all electric rates, while others may offer discounts when the consumer has met certain minimum requirements for weatherizing his home.

And no amount of tender loving

care can produce a sweet delicious at harvest time if your orchard is filled with MacIntosh

The comparisons become even more difficult if you try to stack your electric bill up against that of a friend who's served by a different supplier. It's akin to comparing your shiny apple with your friend's juicy navel orange.

Most of the electricity that flows to North Carolina consumers is generated by the state's three major power companies: Carolina Power and Light Co., Duke Power Co. and Virginia Electric and Power Co.

Some of that power goes to the retail customers of these companies, while part of it flows into lines of the Electric Membership Corporations and municipal systems.

In the process, these investor-owned companies play the role of a farm supply center, where the EMCs and municipalities buy seedlings for transplanting into their own carefully tilled soils. However, these seedlings are nearly full grown when they're taken from the seed beds—and carry healthy price tags as a result.

The prices vary greatly from one "supply center" to another because their investments in equipment and manpower, as well as their operating procedures, also vary greatly.

But the co-ops and cities can't pick and choose among these suppliers to get the best prices available. They're stuck with the power company that's assigned to their territory, and must rely on government regulators to assure that the company's wholesale prices are fair.

Meanwhile, as the EMC and municipal "farmers" are tending their crops, the power companies are carefully watching some of their own seedlings mature and ripen on neighboring farms.

Thus, these various "farmers" don't start out on an equal footing. One has top-of-the-line tractors for use on large tracts of land, while another gets by with less costly equipment for a crop covering only a few acres. One may go to his hometown bank for financing, while another can borrow from family or friends.

In addition, all of them must cut through a thicket of government regulations on how a particular crop may be grown and marketed. Some must meet state requirements that don't apply to others, while those others are coping with their own set of federal requirements.

As a result, a patchwork of bookkeeping procedures has been developed to determine how some of the power companies' "seed bed" operating costs should be passed onto the consumer. Beginning next month, they'll be using a total of five different methods of calculating how much the consumer should be charged for the fuel that's used to generate the power he buys.

When all these varied elements blend together in the form of farm fresh produce at our make-believe supermarket, it should come as no surprise that the consumer can't make sensible comparisons between CP&L cabbage, Duke squash, VEPCO grapes, municipal tomatoes and EMC lettuce.

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# 125 Communities Are Honored For Industrial Development

A record 125 communities across North Carolina have been named winners in the Community of Excellence Awards Program, signifying that they have taken a series of steps to make themselves accessible and attractive for new industry.

The awards were presented to officials of each community by Gov. James B. Hunt in ceremonies at Raleigh. He said about \$9 billion has been invested in new industry in the state in the past 4.5 years, resulting in 130,000 new jobs.

The program is available only to towns with fewer than 15,000 residents

and only if the town has some industrial sites ready for immediate use.

An applicant must also have a functioning economic promotion organization, a development corporation able to finance construction of industrial buildings, a detailed community profile and up-to-date brochure pointing out community facilities and services, a functioning planning commission, a knowledgeable development team and an aggressive sales pitch.

The 1981 winners are:

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Fairmont  
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Gibsonville  
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Hamlet  
Hazelwood  
Hendersonville  
Hertford  
High Shoals  
Huntersville  
Jamestown  
Jefferson  
Jonesville  
Kenansville  
Kings Mountain  
La Grange  
Landis  
Laurinburg  
Liberty  
Lincolnton  
Littleton  
Louisburg  
Lucama  
Maggie Valley  
Magnolia  
Maxton  
Mayodan  
Maysville  
Mocksville  
Morehead City  
Mount Olive  
Murfreesboro  
Newport  
Norlina  
North Wilkesboro  
Pamlico County  
Pinetops  
Pittsboro  
Plymouth  
Pollocksville  
Raeford  
Red Springs  
Reidsville  
Richlands

Roanoke Rapids  
Robbinsville  
Robersonville  
Rockingham  
Rose Hill  
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Seaboard  
Selma  
Sims  
Smithfield  
Sparta  
Spruce Pine  
Stanley  
Stantonsburg  
Sylva  
Tabor City  
Tarboro  
Taylorsville  
Trenton  
Valdese  
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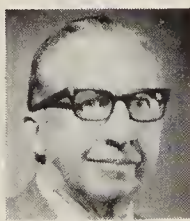
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## Teague Named To Co-op Council Post



Teague



Colvard

Carlyle Teague, director of public affairs for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, has been named to succeed Charles D. Colvard as executive vice president of the N.C. Cooperative Council.

Teague will assume the post upon Colvard's retirement in January.

Colvard joined the Council in 1969 as a part-time assistant to the late Harry B. Caldwell, who served as a part-time chief executive of the organization. Colvard became the first full-time executive of the Council when Caldwell retired in 1974.

Teague is an Alamance County native whose family was a member of electric, credit, dairy, purchasing and marketing cooperatives. He has a BS degree from N.C. State University.

Prior to joining the Department of Agriculture in 1969, Teague spent four years as director of member and employee relations at Central Carolina Farmers in Durham.

He is married to the former Martha Waugh of Greensboro.

## Cover Photo Reflects Season's Warmth, Spirit

The warmth and spirit of the holiday season shine through this photo, which was shot by Raleigh photographer George Zellers.

A past president of the Raleigh Optimist Club, he has served as an Optimist Zone Lt. Governor. He is past president of several professional associations and the Snow Camp Historical Drama Society. He serves as chairman of the administrative board of Highland United Methodist Church in Raleigh.

The Cooperative Council is a statewide federation of cooperatives which conducts educational programs, public relations and government relations activities on behalf of the co-ops.

## Tar Heel EMCs Get REA Loans

Two North Carolina electric cooperatives have been granted loans from the Rural Electrification Administration for expansion projects:

- **Haywood Electric Membership Corporation**, Waynesville, has been awarded a \$1.7 million loan for a project that includes service for 1,060 additional consumers, 38 miles of distribution line and various system improvements.

When the project is completed, the EMC will be serving 13,341 consumer-members over 1,621 miles of line in portions of Haywood, Buncombe, Transylvania, Jackson and Macon Counties.

- **Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation**, Dudley, has been awarded a \$1.8 million loan for a project that includes service for 900 additional consumers, 56 miles of distribution line and various system improvements.

On completion of the project, the co-op will be serving 15,261 consumer-members over 1,926 miles of distribution line in portions of Wayne, Duplin, Johnston, Jones, Sampson and Wilson Counties.

In both cases, the REA loans will finance 70 percent of the work, while the remaining 30 percent will be financed through the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

## 21 Elected To EMC Boards

Four newcomers and 17 incumbents have been elected to the Boards of Directors of six Elect Membership Corporations during recent EMC annual meetings:

- **Lumbee River EMC**, Red Springs—Re-elected were Elias Rogers of Rt. 1, Red Springs; Haro Dean Brewer of Rt. 1, Red Springs; Bradford Oxendine of Rt. 4, Lumberton and Marciea Lowery of Rt. 3, Laurinburg.

- **Brunswick EMC**, Shallotte—Newcomers elected to the board were Moses Herring of Rt. 3, Supply; Emery Smith of Rt. 1, Nakina and Jake Godwin of Rt. 1, Chadbourn.

- **Davidson EMC**, Lexington—Re-elected were Eston B. Stokes of Rt. 1, Linwood; B. Glenn Smith of Lexington and Doak H. Skeen of Rt. 2, Denton.

- **Rutherford EMC**, Forest City—The newcomer on the board is Harold R. Oates of Rt. 1, Gastonia. Re-elected were Oliver Taylor of Rt. 1, Mill Spring; David W. McGimsey of Rt. 7, Morganton and J.T. Wyant of Rt. 1, Vale.

- **Tri-County EMC**, Dudley—Re-elected were C.C. Ivey, Jr. of Rt. 2, Mt. Olive; Frederick P. Kittrell of Rt. 2, LaGrange; F. Kermit Holland of Rt. 2, Mt. Olive and James N. Price of Rt. 5, Mt. Olive.

- **Pitt & Greene EMC**, Farmville—Re-elected were Lloyd Gay of Rt. 1, Fountain; Anna Belle Morris of Rt. 1, Snow Hill and Horace Moore of Snow Hill.

## Tar Heel 4-H Members Win National Honors

North Carolina 4-H members won eight national honors during the National Junior Horticultural Association's 47th annual convention in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Frank Howey Jr., of Rt. 6, Monroe won two national awards—in the experimental horticulture and environmental beautification projects.



# ERE / EVERYWHERE / HERE / THERE

Other national winners and their categories were Jeff Parsons of Rt. 4, Martha, marketing demonstration contest; Ginger Clough of Rt. 2, Columbia, artistic arrangements demonstration; Traci White of Cleveland, horticultural use demonstration; William Lamar Carter of Charlotte, environmental beautification project; Steve Griffin of Marshville, horticultural production and marketing project and Jennifer Brooks of Rt. 2, Monroe, experimental horticulture project.

Miss Brooks was also elected Southern Regional Director for 1981.

Blue award winners were Karen Boren of Chapel Hill, non-illustrated talk, and Blair Farrow of Asheville, horticultural use demonstration.

North Carolina's 4-H horticultural identification, information and judging team placed 12th in the nation. Members of the team were

Carla Smithson of Elizabeth City; Terry Copeland of Rt. 6, Elizabeth City and John Williams of Elizabeth City.

## Home Folks

**Charles C. Jones** of Trenton has been named the 1981 Tree Farmer of the Year by the North Carolina Forestry Association. . . . **Dr. John W. Nance** of Clinton has been named Family Physician of the Year by the N.C. Academy of Family Physicians . . . **Dr. E. M. "Bud" Rallings**, an associate professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, has received the Irwin W. Sperry Award from the N.C. Family Life Council. It's the council's highest honor for contributions toward improving family relations in the state. . . . **Kim Weeks**, daughter of Emily Green of Long Beach and David Weeks of Lake Wales, Fla., has been named the 1982 Poultry Queen of the N.C. Poultry Federation. She is an art major at UNC-G . . . **Virgil Shull** of Rt. 3 Vale, who owns and operates a 300-acre dairy farm, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of Rutherford Electric Membership Corporation, Forest City, succeeding **Gary Whitener** of Rt. 4, Hickory. Whitener resigned to become a district manager with the EMC.

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# Trip Offers Inside Look At Government

If you are a high school junior who'd like to learn more about your government and rural electric cooperatives while travelling with other teen-agers from across the state, the Rural Electric Youth Tour could be for you.

Each June, about half of North Carolina's Electric Membership Corporations sponsor one or more students on the week-long trip to Washington.

This year, 30 Tar Heel young people participated in the program, seeing the sights around the nation's capital, visiting with their congressmen and spending an evening at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The 1982 trip is scheduled for June 12-18.

Several events are scheduled during the week with all the other

900 teenagers from across the country who are also part of the Youth Tour. They include an All-States Dinner and Dance and a Youth Day program, which always features an outstanding speaker on a topic of current interest.

One evening, several states get together on a boat ride down the Potomac, complete with music for dancing.

The North Carolina group will gather in Raleigh on Saturday, June 12 for an afternoon of orientation at the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives' headquarters and an evening of getting acquainted before leaving by chartered bus for Washington on Sunday morning.

During the week, the group will visit such historic sites as Mount Vernon, the U.S. Capitol, the famous monuments and the

Library of Congress. A trip to the National Zoo and a foreign embassy also add to the variety of the week's activities.

Students who are selected to participate in the Youth Tour automatically become eligible for a \$1,000 college scholarship and for a spot on the national Youth Consulting Board, sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

If you are interested in applying for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, contact your local Electric Membership Corporation to see if they will be sponsoring any young people on the 1982 Rural Electric Youth Tour.

Or, write for more information to Ms. Patty Wheeler, NCAEC, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611.

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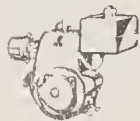
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# Precautions Can Prevent Wood Cutting Accidents

A local forestry agent believes many of the wood cutting accidents occurring across North Carolina can be prevented with a few precautions. Jim Kea, Martin County area forestry agent for the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service, says felling and cutting up trees is dangerous for the most experienced logger, but common accidents can be avoided.

Kea's advice is as follows:  
Never cut alone. Most fatalities occur when one person attempts to do the work of two. A second person can assist if an accident occurs.

When felling trees, always establish several clear escape routes. When the tree starts to fall, cut off the saw and move quickly away from the direction the fall and at an angle to either side. Never stand or run straight back behind a tree. Fatalities commonly occur when trees fall the wrong way, get become entangled, or the tree splits and jumps backward.

Keep all unnecessary helpers and equipment out of the reach of a tree. Spectators should devote full attention to the felling operation. Stop unnecessary conversation and running motors. Fatalities often occur when a warning is not heard by the person who is not watching the felling operation.

Be aware of limbs that may break loose with windy conditions or when a tree begins to fall. Wear a hard hat just in case.

Know the limitations of your equipment. This includes rope, chains, saws and winches, as well as the people doing the work. Most accidents occur when cutters are tired or in a hurry to get through. Loosen up with stretching exercises before starting to avoid sore strains. Always lift with knees bent, using your leg muscles rather than your back. Balance loads. It is easier to carry a 20-foot, four-inch tree balanced on your shoulder than half that length cut up and cradled in your arms.

Keep all helpers clear of running saws. When coming near a person running a saw never approach from behind. A sudden turn could result in a serious injury.

Always keep a firm footing when cutting. Cut off the saw when moving from tree to tree. Never cut above shoulder height and keep both hands firmly on the saw. Wear snug fitting clothes. Protective pants designed to stop a fast moving chain saw are hot but well worth the discomfort.

Eye protection not only guards

against dust and chips but also against limbs and briars. Ear protection can be in the form of muffs in the winter and plugs designed for shooters in the summer. The eye and ear protection can be found as part of a hard hat.

Guard against kick back which occurs when the trip of the saw comes in contact with an object while the chain is moving. This causes the saw to climb up the object or at least jump. Many new saws have chain brakes designed to stop the chain when kick back occurs. Guards over the tip will also prevent kick back, but reduce the effective cutting length of the bar.

If a tree lodges or hangs in another tree, pull it down by mechanical means. Don't leave it lodged or cut the tree it is lodged in. When pulling with ropes or chains make sure you have at least 20 feet beyond the reach of the tree. Avoid felling in high or shifting winds.

"Always think ahead," Kea concluded. "Take time for safety. Read directions that go with your equipment."

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# Consumers March To Different Drummers In Paying For Fuel To Generate Power

The bulk of the electricity used by North Carolina consumers is generated by three major power companies, but the consumers must march to different drummers when it comes to paying for the fuel required to produce that power.

Retail customers of those investor-owned companies must keep pace with a beat dictated by a state regulatory agency, which has freely authorized variations on the standard rhythm from time to time.

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*See related editorial, page 3*

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Meanwhile, consumer-members of the state's 28 Electric Membership Corporations follow a cadence that's set by each of the power suppliers, with approval of a federal regulatory agency.

As a result, beginning next month, five different methods will be used to calculate the cost of fuel for generating electric power flowing to North Carolina consumers. Two methods will apply to retail customers of the power companies and three additional methods will be used for EMC consumers.

"It's a real can of worms," said John Kutter, manager of power supply for N.C. Electric Membership Corporation, the generation and transmission organization that serves EMCs across the state.

Kutter said the methods of calculating fuel costs are the same whether the fuel is coal, oil, gas or uranium. Only the price tags vary.

He pointed out that all three methods of establishing fuel costs for EMC consumers have been approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

The EMCs buy most of their power from Carolina Power and Light Co., Duke Power Co. and Virginia Electric and Power Co. at wholesale rates, which are established by FERC.

The agency also approves the formulas that are used by those power companies for calculating fuel charges on the power sold to the EMCs, which must pass those charges on through to

their member-owners.

Effective in January, each of the companies will be using its own formula.

The State Utilities Commission, which sets the power companies' retail rates, developed the formula for calculating fuel charges for retail customers. But it has already departed from that formula a couple of times.

In all cases, Kutter said, the formula is designed to arrive at a fuel charge "adder" that allows the generating company involved to collect the actual costs of fuel from the ultimate consumer.

The private power companies accomplish this under a procedure that calls for setting a fixed charge that remains constant over a four-month period.

The fixed charge is set by the Utilities Commission after holding special hearings to examine the companies' fuel costs.

"The amount of the charge is based on the company's actual costs for an earlier four-month period," Kutter said. "For example, the charge for December-March would be based on costs recorded during the previous May-August."

This means the fuel costs are always collected on a load pattern that's different from the load pattern the company experienced when the fuel was used, he added.

"In the case we cited, it's obvious that CP&L's load pattern in May-August is not the same as it is in December-March. In effect, the company is taking the cost of fuel burned during the peak air conditioning season and charging it to consumers during the peak heating season."

To avoid this situation on the company's heavy fuel costs from last summer, which came about because many of CP&L's nuclear facilities were

out of service, the Utilities Commission required the company to depart from the standard fuel charge procedure.

A three-member panel of the commission ordered the costs spread over a 12-month period beginning next month, rather than the usual period of December-March.

Kutter said this arrangement is designed to lead to "pyramiding" of fuel costs for CP&L retail customers next year.

"If the company's Brunswick Nuclear Plant is out a lot next year, it's expected to be, we could have CP&L's retail customers paying high fuel costs for 1981 and 1982 at the same time. Of course, the commission could continue to spread the costs over extended periods into the future, but that can't go on forever. There have to be a day of reckoning sometime."

All of these problems are avoided under the FERC-approved procedure covering the way the power companies calculate fuel charges for the energy they sell to the EMCs.

"The EMCs are billed for fuel costs with only a slight delay, so the charges are always more current than is true on the retail side," Kutter said.

For EMCs served by VEPCO, the procedure calls for applying a three-month average of actual costs. For example, costs recorded during September-November are applied to December's usage.

For EMCs served by Duke or CLS, the actual costs are now applied after a one-month delay. That is, costs recorded in October are applied to December's usage.

"This means that consumers of CP&L-served co-ops have already had the most part, covered the high fuel costs from last summer—and won't have that haunting them all through next year, as will be the case for CP&L retail customers," Kutter said.

Meanwhile, CP&L is shifting to a new procedure effective in January that'll make the fuel charge for EMCs even more current, he added.

Under that plan, CP&L will include a fuel cost estimate on current bills, with an adjustment to be made later for actual costs.

"This would mean that in January the EMCs will pay an estimated fuel charge for January. If the actual costs are higher, the co-ops will be billed for the difference in March. If the costs are lower, the co-ops will get a credit for the overpayment in March."

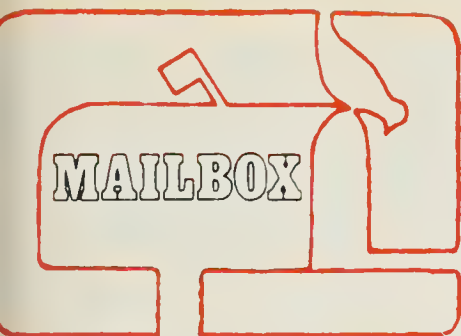
—Owen Bis

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“  
It's a  
real can of  
worms  
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### **"I'm Incensed!"**

I'm incensed at your biased "Counting Our New Deal Blessings." This has no place in a publication directed to everyone tied to an electric co-op in North Carolina.

At a time when we should unite in this country, you, newspapers and TV tear down our future, glorify our past and offer no constructive information to help restore this country to what it once was.

I agree the New Deal gave us rural electrification. Is this to say that no one but this New Deal could have done this?

Production Credit Associations—How do we know that in 30 odd years someone else might have even had a better plan?

- How can it be said without the New Deal there would be no TVA etc.? Who knows what would have been done if we'd had other than the New Deal! No place in the article is it mentioned about our national debt created by the New Deal and which in a few years can nullify all gains claimed by New Deal proponents.

- Social Security—Great to a point. The New Deal fixed it to take in everyone and created no safeguards when it goes broke.

- Bank Deposit Insurance—How sorry I will be for depositors when large numbers of banks and savings and loans close. Only about 5 percent will be protected unless the government prints new money to replace it. What will that do to inflation?

- Cooperatives—Same as for top soil.

- Low Interest Rates/Keeping the National Debt from Soaring—Look back again at the growth of the national debt during the New Deal.

- Credit Unions—Of all their efforts, this may have been the best.

I hope you will publish another

article on what can be done to make us the power we once were.

Your article doesn't mention the number of years we were at war during the New Deal. Those cost us more than all accomplishments by them.

Lyle Russell  
Rt. 1, Sparta

### **"I Enjoy Carolina Country"**

Just wanted to let you know how much my family and I enjoy *Carolina Country*. We really look forward to getting it each month.

Elizabeth Dry  
Rt. 4, Concord

### **"I Can't Think Of A Nicer Place To Settle."**

I am originally from New Jersey and have lived in many different places. Nowhere have I felt more like being at home than here in North Carolina. I have lived in the Dudley area on and off for over six years, and now I'm here to stay. I can't think of a nicer place to settle. I enjoy reading *Carolina Country*... Thank you very much for a fine magazine.

Ree Young  
Rt. 3, Dudley

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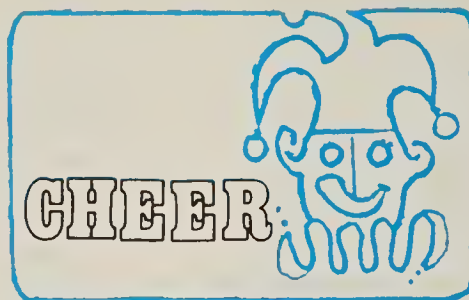
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A traveling salesman, caught in a torrential storm, stopped overnight at a farmhouse. In the morning, he looked out on a flood tearing through the front yard. He watched pieces of fence, chicken coops, branches, and an old straw hat floating past with the rushing current. Then he saw the straw hat come back, this time moving upstream past the house! Then he saw it go down again. Pretty soon it came back upstream—and by now the salesman wondered if he had gone crazy. Finally he called the farmer's daughter.

"Oh," said the rural miss, after a glance out the window, "That must be granddad. He said yesterday that in spite of hell or high water he was going to mow the lawn today."

.....

A husband came home from work one day to find the house a mess.

"What happened?" he exclaimed to his wife.

"You're always wondering what I do all day," she said. "Well, here it is; I didn't do it."

.....



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## Cover Reprints



Through a special arrangement with noted wildlife photographer John Trott, we are now offering reprints of the outstanding photo of a male cardinal that graced the cover of the April *Carolina Country*.

The photo, which appeared in the book *Birds of the Carolinas*, is reprinted in the size of the magazine, with a white border on heavy 11" by 14" glossy finish stock. They're priced at \$4 each, including postage charges. Use the coupon below to order your copy.

Orders received after Dec. 15 cannot be guaranteed for delivery before Christmas.

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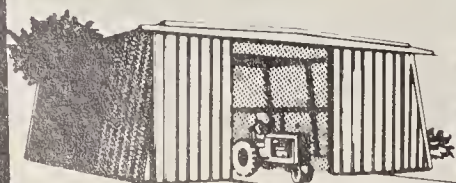
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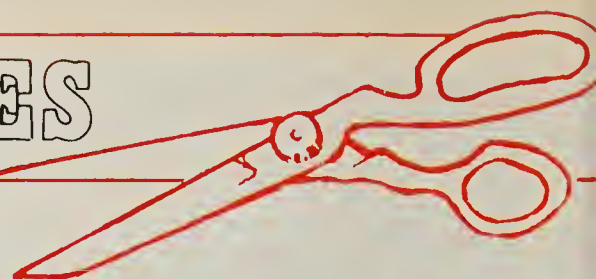
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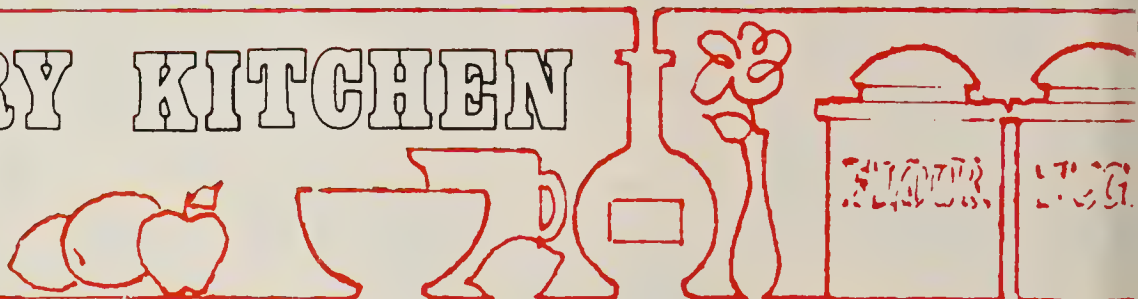
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## COUNTRY KITCHEN



### COUNTRY KITCHEN

Pumpkin pie recipes are a dime a dozen, right? Wrong! This one is perfect for those who still like the traditional pumpkin pie for the holidays—and most of us do—but the difference is how quick and easy it is. The cook in your family will marvel at how simple this recipe is because it makes its own crust. Just mix all the ingredients, bake, and you have a perfect pie every time, without all the trouble of making a crust. Garnish the pie with whipped cream or ice cream, and you certainly won't have any leftovers to worry about.

### COUNTRY KITCHEN

Submitted by Diane G. Snider of Denton

#### Impossible Pumpkin Pie

1 can or 2 C. pumpkin  
2 eggs  
½ C. Bisquick mix  
¾ C. sugar

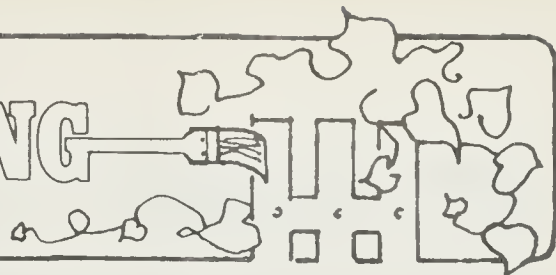
2 tsp. vanilla  
1 can (13 oz.) evaporated milk  
2 Tbl. melted butter  
2½ tsp. pumpkin pie spice

Mix all ingredients and pour in pie pans. Bake at 350° for 50 to 60 minutes. Makes two pies.

If you would like to share a recipe with this column, send it to: CAROLINA COUNTRY, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611. We pay \$5. for published recipes and present each monthly winner a set of 50 recipe cards with the winning recipe printed on them.



# DO YOUR OWN THING



## Let's Monkey Around!

Here are patterns for 9 different animal cuddlies to sew. Perfect for birthdays and holidays, these little cuties are designed to be sewn of gingham and calico. Eloise Elephant utters her long lashes, while the yarn-maned Lion preens its pom-pom tail. Mice cavort beside a calico cat and a gingham dog. And Monty Moose longs to caper across "blanket mountains" on your child's bed. This colorful 15-page instruction booklet offers real fun for a rainy day!

And for dolls whose personalities will charm small hearts and big ones, too!), consider Mother Monkey and baby. All toys are huggable size, ranging from 9½" (mouse) to 18" (monkey). Step-by-step cutting, sewing, stuffing and embroidery instructions are included, plus full-size patterns. Materials are not included.

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Donna John

# The Last Christmas Tree

*This story was written by Dr. Phillip E. Lewis of West Jefferson, dean of curriculum programs at Wilkes Community College in North Wilkesboro. It is one of a series of four children's stories that he has written for his family, which includes three children.*

*He and his wife, Cheryl, own Dogwood Realty Co. in West Jefferson. They are members of Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation, Lenoir.*

From far away came Christmas carols, tinkly tunes of Santas and toys, soft hymns and Yuletide favorites.

The holiday sounds added warmth to the cold night air, as a burly man with a black beard stood behind a rusty barrel warming his hands over the fire leaping from inside.

He rubbed his hands briskly together, looking over the vacant lot that had been transformed—for a few brief weeks—into a center of holiday cheer: a place to buy Christmas trees.

Bark-covered slabs clung together to form a make-shift corral around the trees. Around the rough frame, a string of colored lights shone gaily. Only three trees remained on this icy

Christmas Eve.

A white car rolled onto the corner lot and stopped.

From the car stepped a mother and father and two young children. Frosty laughter spilled out of their furry coats. Crackling over the freezing snow, they hurried into the tree corral. Moving from one to another, they began to compare the few remaining trees.

Little Green, the smallest of the trees, crossed his twigs and made a wish. His knotty heart pounded with anticipation. This little evergreen had arrived on the lot weeks ago along with hundreds of others from forests far away. Among the haughty blue spruces, the aloof firs, and fancy white pines, he had felt lost and alone.



Day after day, as shoppers picked over the trees, Little Green arched his trunk and stood as tall and straight as he could. He blushed with shame when children said, "Don't take this tree, Daddy, it's ugly and crooked. We don't want this poor tree in our house."

It hurt to be left behind time after time. But he was a courageous little tree. He never failed to look cheerful and gay for every family. Even now, after so many disappointments, Little Green listened carefully to what his family was saying.

"What do you think, Fred? Do we want a big tree or a small one?"

"You and the kids decide, Sophie. No matter what you want, it looks like pretty slim pickings."

The man with the beard grabbed the few trees and stood them against the slab boards. All four were poised on their lobbly trunks. Little Green flexed his needles and tried to appear perky.

Beside him, a crusty old spruce slumped with boredom. He was resigned. It was the trash heap for him for Christmas. On the other side prissed a frilly white pine, trimmed and sculptured to a perfect cone.

Her nose in the air, the pine trumped, "Another family with absolutely no taste!"

"We'll take this one," the lady said, pointing to the white pine.

The white pine acted nonchalant. She didn't want them to know she was bursting with joy. During the past few days, she had begun to wonder if she was as beautiful as she imagined herself to be. Now, her pride was intact. By Christmas morning, who would know whether she was chosen last or first?

Little Green let his arms slouch. His heart sank too.

Moments later, a red pickup truck crunched to a stop beside the corral. A young man in cowboy boots leaped from the cab. Hastily, he reached over the top board and grabbed the surprised old spruce from the enclosure. He rushed up to the bearded man and shoved some bills into an out-stretched hand.

In a shower of flying ice, the young man gunned his engine and raced into the night. The crusty old spruce peeped over the tailgate and waved a tiny goodbye with a fluttering branch.

Little Green smiled. He was happy for his friend.

The wind picked up. The traffic died down. Fewer people passed. Soon, there were none.

The lot man began to count the money he had received during the day. Looking at Little Green, he thought, "Only one tree. Not bad. I'm not staying any longer for just one tree."

He rubbed his beard to free it of icicles. After turning out the lights, he got into his car and drove away.

Little Green huddled in the darkness. His proud heart wilted. A tiny teardrop fell on a quivering branch. A snowflake formed in the cold air.

There was no more traffic; no one anywhere. Everyone is home, Little Green thought, decorating happy trees and preparing for the most perfect day of the year.

A gust of wind swirled his snowflake tears around his pointy top. Through them, Little Green saw a figure moving quietly down the sidewalk. It was a lady in a bulky brown coat. Her coat hid a white nurse's uniform. She wore freshly polished white shoes, which became soiled with each careful step as she vainly

tried to avoid the murky puddles of slush.

The nurse passed in front of the lot, pausing briefly to glance toward the corral. A soft light from somewhere reflected off Little Green's snowflake tears.

She continued on her way.

Halfway down the block, she stopped and stood for several seconds. She turned and walked with short strides back to the corral. Reaching it, she gently lifted Little Green from his lonesome corner spot.

The nurse moved briskly up the sidewalk. Dragging the evergreen behind her, she threaded her way across the street. Coming to a huge building, she pushed open a side door and entered beneath a sign reading: Children's Hospital.

Clinging to the tree, the nurse pushed a button on a wall. An elevator door opened. She stepped in and stood Little Green against the back. The door closed. The machine hummed its way upward.

The elevator opened on a wide hallway. The nurse turned to her right and marched down the hall. At the last room, she flung open the door and dragged Little Green into the room.

A white bed sat sturdily in the middle of the room. A tube of clear liquid was suspended on a metal hanger. A faint buzz came from a small machine beside the bed.

A small boy lay in the bed, crying softly. He had no colored ribbons or packages for Christmas morning.

The nurse smiled, holding the evergreen beside the bed. The frail little boy stopped crying as his eyes opened wide.

Little Green arched his trunk, standing tall and proud.

He knew, suddenly, why he had been chosen to be the last Christmas tree.







## A Village Right Out Of Any Child's Christmas Dreams

It is the Christmas village of every child's dreams, complete with shoppers, skiers, carolers, church goers and, of course, Santa Claus.

If you were to walk through this village—with its walls of gingerbread and sugar cubes—you would probably get off at the train station, bags in hand, to spend Christmas with the farmhouse family.

Walking down the snow-covered streets, you might wave to shoppers leaving with holiday bundles from the heavily-laden shelves of the general store, where two men play checkers in front of a potbellied stove.

You might hear carolers singing around the lighted Christmas tree in the middle of town, greet a family on its way to church, all decked out in their Sunday best. Your eye might be caught by the colorful skiers on the slopes of a nearby mountain, or by the firelight glowing from the blacksmith's shop.

At the farmhouse, junior is on the swing and grandma is feeding the chickens. Grandpa is on his way to the outhouse with a cane over his arm.

In reality, this tiny village is only five feet wide and eight feet long. It's mounted on four styrofoam blocks, with cotton

spread over it for snow.

But the reality doesn't destroy the magic of this creation, which is the handiwork of Vicki Simmons of West End in Moore County.

Ms. Simmons began work on the project to fill lonely hours during the Yuletide season of

### Recipe: Yuletide Gingerbread Fantasy

Here's Vicki Simmons' recipe for a Yuletide gingerbread fantasy:

6 boxes sugar cubes  
20 lbs. gingerbread  
4 dozen egg whites  
4 styrofoam blocks

Cotton, as needed  
Dash of Vinegar  
Christmas records  
Imagination of a six-year-old

Put the Christmas records on the stereo. Plan to spend about 300 hours on the project.

Mix gingerbread according to recipe, adding a dash of vinegar for hardening. Mix powdered sugar, egg whites and water to icing consistency, again adding a dash of vinegar. Add color if desired.

Bake gingerbread according to package instructions. Let cool for several hours. Begin building, using your own specifications. Ice roof.

Let imagination run wild, liberally applying the child in you. People, animals and furniture can be handmade of wax and plastic or store bought.

When project is complete, share with family and friends amid the glow of holiday candles and Christmas tree lights.

Text and black-and-white photo by  
Liz Huskey  
Color photos by Bob Rufa



1975. Her mother had died and her son Archie, now 30, had gone away to college.

She'd had lots of experience building small holiday snow scenes since Archie's childhood, and decided to try something on a much bigger scale.

Each year since, she has added something new to the village, which was exhibited at Carolina Bank in Pinehurst last year. It's now on display through the holiday season at First Federal Savings and Loan of Moore County on Broad Street in Southern Pines.

Ms. Simmons delights at the reactions the village prompts in people who see it.

"Kids' eyes, when they see it, get about that big," she said, waving her thumb and pointing her index finger into a half-dollar-sized circle.

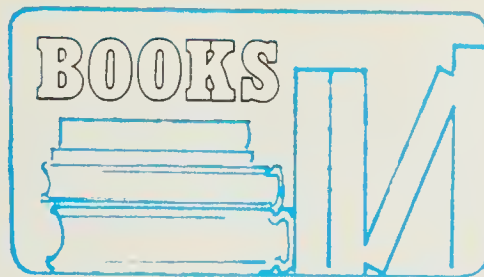


**Vicki Simmons** She said that when it was on display last year, a man came by the bank every day to stare at it. He finally told her that the village had everything it needed, except for a nativity scene. She quickly painted out a tiny manger he'd missed in front of the fantasy-themed church.

While much of Ms. Simmons' time has been devoted to building the Christmas village, she devotes much of her energies to another kind of construction. She's secretary-treasurer of Simmons Construction Co., a family business.

son Archie, who's now president of the company, is so proud of his mother's village that he wants to spray it with acrylic and preserve it under glass.

That is probably the dream of many: to capture the childhood memories of happy Christmases and, through the magic of his mother's gingerbread wonderland, share them with others for years to come.



*An Artist's Catch: Watercolors by Frank Stick*, edited by David Stick. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 256 pages, \$24.95 boxed.

If you are a fisherman, or a naturalist, or a watercolor artist, or simply someone who loves a well-made book, then you should be delighted by *An Artist's Catch*.

Frank Stick, who died 15 years ago, was a well-known wildlife illustrator and long-time resident of the Outer Banks, instrumental in starting the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

This collection of his work is a glorious gallery of watercolors, an aquarium of exquisitely-rendered common and curious fish from the Southern waters.

The plates—like the entire book, which comes in an elegant slipcase—are simply gorgeous.

Each of the several hundred fish is intricately and splendidly

detailed, in its name and its looks—the deepwater chimera, the Southern stargazer, the opah and ballyhoo, the alewife and grenadier, the rainbow smelt and stoplight parrotfish and scrawled cowfish.

Though Stick represents most of the fish in profile, he enjoys capturing the game fish in more dramatic poses, as with the swordfish bursting from tropical waters, arching and twisting on his taut line.

*An Artist's Catch* is quite a catch indeed, perfect for the sportsman's coffee table or under



**We owe a great debt of thanks to UNC for producing such a beautiful book, and to the late Frank Stick for the accuracy and glory of his vision.**



his Christmas tree. We owe a great debt of thanks to UNC for producing such a beautiful book, and to the late Frank Stick for the accuracy and glory of his vision.

—Michael McFee



The needlefish was one of 300 fish portraits produced by Frank Stick, all of which appear in *An Artist's Catch: Watercolors of Frank Stick*, published by University of North Carolina Press. (Color negatives provided by Sports Afield.)



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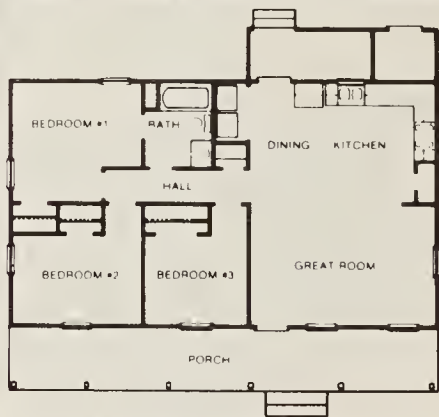


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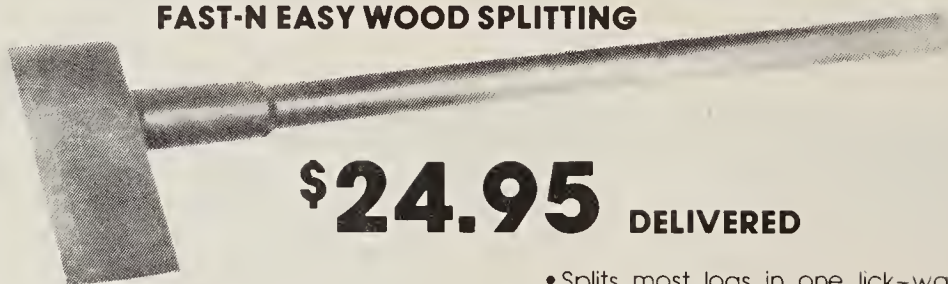


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# Ten EMCs See Power Costs Rise By 9%

The ten North Carolina Electric Membership Corporations which buy power from Duke Power Co. have begun paying 9 percent more for that power, under terms of an agreement between Duke and the EMCs.

The higher rates, which will add \$24 million a year to the power costs for the co-ops involved, were put into effect on Oct. 18 subject to refund pending a review by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Duke had originally petitioned the federal agency to raise the rates by 16.8 percent, but agreed to accept the 9 percent hike on an interim basis. The original filing had included the company's investment in the McGuire Nuclear Plant as part of the rate base. The plant had been expected to become commercial in October.

When the plant is declared commercial, possibly this month, Duke will petition FERC for an additional boost in rates to reflect the McGuire investment.

The EMCs affected by the new rates are: Blue Ridge, Lenoir; Crescent, Statesville; Davidson, Lexington; Haywood, Waynesville; Pee Dee, Wadesboro; Piedmont, Hillsborough; Rutherford, Forest City; Surry-Yadkin, Dobson; Union, Monroe and Wake, Wake Forest.

## Farmers' Plans Guided By Extension Weather Service

When Tar Heel farmers need a weather forecast to help them time a planting or a harvest, they often tune in to the N. C. Agricultural Extension Service's Agricultural Weather Program.

Broadcast over the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) weather radio network, the weather program adapts National Weather Service forecasts to state agricultural needs.

Two extension specialists, Katherine Perry and Gregory Johnson, prepare the agricultural forecast at North Carolina State University.

They tailor the forecasts for North Carolina's 17 weather zones, letting farmers know expected heat or cold stress for livestock and poultry, frost and freeze warnings, suitable planting dates, rain probabilities for pesticide spraying, fertilizer application, irrigation scheduling and more.

### "Weather" and Commercial Stations Air Bulletins

To receive these agricultural weather advisories, farmers must have a "weather" radio or a radio equipped with a weather band and tune it to one of three FM frequencies—162.40, 162.475 or 162.55 megahertz.

Eight NOAA stations now broadcast the bulletins in North Carolina: New Bern and Wilmington - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Rocky Mount, Fayetteville and Raleigh-Durham - 10 a.m. to noon every five minutes and noon to 1 p.m. every 5 minutes; Charlotte - 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. every 10 minutes; Winston-Salem - 6 to 8 a.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. and Asheville - 4 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Stations in Cape Hatteras and Norfolk will begin airing the reports in March. Meanwhile, the advisories are also broadcast by various commercial radio stations across the state.

In addition, the network, through the county extension agents, conducts educational programs to help farmers make better use of the advisory bulletins.

For more information about the N.C. Weather Program, write for a free pamphlet from the N.C. Agricultural Extension Service, Communications Division, North Carolina State University, P.O. Box 5037, Raleigh, N.C. 27650.

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## You Are A Marvel

The quote below, which came across my desk as a holiday season greeting, carries a message that's especially timely right now. Titled "You are a Marvel," it's by Pablo Casals:

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and never will be again.

And what do we teach our children in school? We teach them that two and two make four and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are?

We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are: You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the world there is no other child exactly like you. In millions of years that have passed, there has never been a child like you. And look at your body—what a wonder it is!

You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything.

Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel?

You must cherish one another. You must work—we must all work to make this world worthy of its children.

## The Strain of Motherhood

Julia Zeigler, who handles the typesetting and preparation of the magazine's pages before they're shipped off to the printer, is about to get her first personal experience with the "marvels" that are babies.

By the time these words reach print, she may already be the beaming mother of her first child.

To help prepare her somewhat for parenthood, some of her friends put together a delightful leaflet titled,

"The Strain of Motherhood." It's a collection of their comments, suggestions and advice.

Here's a sampling from it:

- Whenever you're in the middle of an unbearable stage, just remember that it will pass to something worse.

- Very soon, you'll hear yourself saying all those things that you told your mother you would never say to your child.

- When the baby becomes a teenager, buy a mobile home and keep moving. Leave no forwarding address.

- If you ask me, the only good kid is a grown kid.

- Just do what you jolly well please. Most problems begin with trying to take someone else's advice.

## Please Don't "Scrag"

Our four-year-old, like most children of that age, has her own special way with words.

The knack has allowed her to rewrite the lyrics of old familiar songs, to unintentionally describe adventures her classmates never had and to invent totally new words that suit her purposes.

When Melissa was learning to sing "Jesus Loves Me," her mother and I had a hard time singing along with her because we'd always trip over the verse she'd revised. It isn't "They are weak but he is strong," she informed us in a teacherly tone. It's "They are *short* but he is strong."

Then, there was the time she told us about the classmate who'd "got kidnapped." Turned out that she'd just had the flu.

A few weeks ago, I inspired her inventiveness by speaking sharply to her about something she'd done.

"Don't scrag at me, Daddy," she said.

"What does 'scrag' mean?" I asked.

"It means when you talk mad at somebody."

Maybe she's got something there.

The word seems quite appropriate somehow to describe an angry tone.

We've come to like it so much at our house that the three of us have adopted a handy new pet phrase: "Don't scrag at me and I won't scrag at you."

## Amen, Brother Lear!

For the past six months, a combination of events has left us with but one small-screen TV for purposes, after several years of enjoying it for upstairs viewing where a larger set was available downstairs.

The situation has given us a new appreciation of how often we were watching TV partly because it was conveniently available.

Now, that one set is never where you'd like to have it. So, when you're faced with the inconvenience of lugging the set from one part of the house to another, it's amazing how indifferent you can become to a TV show you once thought you wouldn't want to miss.

This experience made me especially interested in some comments by television producer Norman Lear in an appearance before the House telecommunications subcommittee.

The subcommittee was hearing testimony about the potential impact of new technologies on the country's communications system and on society in general.

Lear pointed out that these new technologies could mean that Americans, who already watch an average of four to six hours of TV each day, will be enticed to watch even more.

"... Such passivity," he said, "cannot be good for the human spirit. It makes for a lessening of interpersonal relationships and for a diminishing desire to explore life outside one's self. It may be 50 or more years before we actually know the results of all this encouragement to catatonia in the living room. But it does not bode well, in my opinion."

Lear suggested that "it is the responsibility of everyone in public life, including this august body, to help educate our people to the fact that too much television viewing, no matter what the quality, can be dangerous to their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health."

Amen, Brother Lear!

Now, if you'll excuse me, please have to run home and move my into the den. There's this great program coming on right away that I don't want to miss. You see, it's about ....

—Owen Bishop





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